**Phrasal Verbs**

[What are Phrasal Verbs?](https://www.englishclub.com/grammar/phrasal-verbs-what.htm)

A phrasal verb is a verb like *pick up*, *turn on* or *get on with*. These verbs consists of a **basic verb + another word or words**. The two or three words that make up a phrasal verb form a short "phrase" - which is why we call them "phrasal verbs". But a phrasal verb is still a verb. ***Look*** is a verb. ***Look up*** is also a verb - a **different** verb. They do not have the same meaning, and they behave differently grammatically. You should treat each phrasal verb as a separate verb, and learn it like any other verb. Look at these examples. You can see that there are three types of phrasal verb formed from a single-word verb:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **verb** | **definition** | **example** |
| **single-word verb** | | **look** | direct your eyes in a certain direction | You must **look** before you leap. |
| **phrasal verb** | verb + adverb | **look up** | search for and find information in a reference book | You can **look up** the word in a dictionary. |
| verb + preposition | **look after** | take care of | Who is **looking after** the baby? |
| verb + adverb + preposition | **look forward to** | anticipate with pleasure | I **look forward to** meeting you. |

**Phrasal Verb: VERB + ADVERB**

The structure of this type of phrasal verb is:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| verb | + | adverb |

These phrasal verbs can be:

* **transitive** (direct object)
* **intransitive** (no direct object)

Look at these examples of transitive and intransitive::

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **meaning** | **example sentence** | |
|  | **direct object** |
| transitive | **put off** | postpone | We will have to **put off** | the meeting. |
| **turn down** | refuse | They **turned down** | my offer. |
| intransitive | **get up** | rise from bed | I don't like to **get up**. |  |
| **break down** | stop working | He was late because his car **broke down**. |  |

**Separable**

When this type of phrasal verb has a direct object, we can usually separate the two parts. For example, "turn down" is **separable**. We can say: "**turn down** my offer" or "**turn** my offer **down**". Look at these example sentences:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| tick | They **turned down** my offer. |
| tick | They **turned** my offer **down**. |

However, if the direct object is a **pronoun**, we have no choice. We **must** separate the two parts of the verb and insert the pronoun. Look at these examples with the verb "switch on". Note that the last one is impossible:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| tick | John **switched on** the radio. |
| tick | John **switched** the radio **on**. |
| tick | John **switched** it **on**. |
| cross | ~~John~~**~~switched on~~**~~it.~~ |

**Separable or inseparable?**  
Many dictionaries tell you when a phrasal verb is separable. If a dictionary writes "look (something) up", you know that the phrasal verb "look up" is separable, and you can say "look something up" and "look up something". It's a good idea to write "sthg/sby" as appropriate in your vocabulary book when you learn a new phrasal verb, like this:

* **get up**
* **break down**
* **break** sthg **off**
* **turn** sthg/sby **down**

This tells you if the verb needs a direct object (and where to place it).

[Phrasal Verbs reference](https://www.englishclub.com/ref/Phrasal_Verbs/): hundreds of phrasal verbs with definitions, example sentences, quizzes and answers

**Phrasal Verb: VERB + PREPOSITION**

This type of phrasal verb is also called a "**prepositional verb**". The structure of a prepositional verb is:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| verb | + | preposition |

Because a preposition always has an object, all prepositional verbs have direct objects (ie they are transitive).

Look at these examples of prepositional verbs:

| **prepositional verb** | **meaning** | **example sentence** | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **direct object** |
| **believe in** | have faith in the existence of | I **believe in** | God. |
| **look after** | take care of | He is **looking after** | the dog. |
| **talk about** | discuss | Did you **talk about** | me? |
| **wait for** | await | John is **waiting for** | Mary. |

Prepositional verbs **cannot be separated**. That means that we cannot put the direct object between the two parts. For example, we must say "look after the baby". We cannot say "look the baby after":

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| tick | Who is **looking after** the baby? |
| cross | ~~Who is~~**~~looking~~**~~the baby~~**~~after~~**~~?~~ |

It is a good idea to write "something/somebody" in your vocabulary book when you learn a new prepositional verb, like this:

* **believe in** something/somebody
* **look after** sthg/sby

This reminds you that the verb needs a direct object (and where to place it).

**Phrasal Verb: VERB + ADVERB + PREPOSITION**

This type of phrasal verb is also called a "**phrasal-prepositional verb**". The structure of a phrasal-prepositional verb is:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| verb | + | adverb | + | preposition |

Look at these examples of phrasal-prepositional verbs:

| **phrasal-prepositional verb** | **meaning** | **example sentence** | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **direct object** |
| **get on with** | have a friendly relationship with | He doesn't **get on with** | his wife. |
| **put up with** | tolerate | I won't **put up with** | your attitude. |
| **look forward to** | anticipate with pleasure | I **look forward to** | seeing you. |
| **run out of** | use up, exhaust | We have **run out of** | eggs. |

Because phrasal-prepositional verbs end with a preposition, **there is always a direct object**. And, like prepositional verbs, phrasal-prepositional verbs **cannot be separated**. Look at these examples:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| tick | We **ran out of** gas. |
| tick | We **ran out of** it. |
| cross | ~~We~~**~~ran~~**~~gas~~**~~out of~~**~~.~~ |
| cross | ~~We~~**~~ran out~~**~~gas~~**~~of~~**~~.~~ |

It is a good idea to write "something/somebody" in your vocabulary book when you learn a new phrasal-prepositional verb, like this:

* **get on with** somebody
* **put up with** sthg/sby
* **run out of** something

This reminds you that the verb needs a direct object (and where to place it).